



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

AUG 29 2017

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressmen Grijalva and Pallone,

This is in response to your letter of July 27, 2017, in which you express concern about phone calls made by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, both of Alaska, about their vote on health care legislation pending before the Senate. You requested that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of the Interior (DOI) “investigate this matter and address all potential legal and ethical violations....”

The OIG has conducted a preliminary review of this matter, including investigative and jurisdictional considerations, and concludes that further investigation would prove unproductive. Although the OIG for DOI has no jurisdictional authority over anyone in Congress, I did write to both Senators offering the opportunity for an interview with OIG investigators, or the opportunity to provide a statement for the record. Both Senators Murkowski and Sullivan declined to be interviewed or to provide statements regarding the matter.

Since the matter has been extensively covered by the *Alaska Dispatch News*, as well as numerous other major national news outlets; and given that both Senators have declined to be interviewed or give a statement, the OIG does not believe that it could meaningfully investigate the matter further.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 208-5745, or your staff may contact Nancy DiPaolo, Director of External Affairs at (202) 208-4357.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Kendall  
Deputy Inspector General